



Old Point Comfort provides safe haven for mariners

BY WAYNE KANOY
POST PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Boaters looking forward to warmer weather and for a marina close to good fishing and boating around Hampton Roads might find the Old Point Comfort Marina here ideal — for various reasons.

With life preserver, admiral's hat and rudder fixed for duty, skippers can steer their motorboats away from the marina to the Chesapeake Bay in approximately five minutes, the Atlantic Ocean in 20 minutes and the James River in 35 minutes. And, according to Theresa Grogan, Old Point Comfort Marina manager, the boat basin's 13-foot mean-low-watermark is "downright appreciated" by many boat handlers.

Owned and operated by the Army, the marina's full complement of services are authorized for active and retired military, Reservists and National Guardsmen, Department of Defense and Nonappropriated Fund civilians, and contractors working on Fort Monroe. Public access to the marina is also authorized but limited.

The marina has 24-hour security and is a sheltered harbor. Services include 314 floating slips, temporary dockage, for accommodating vessels up to 50 feet; 30 and 50 amperage shore power; dockside water; boat ramp; fishing boat rentals; floating fuel dock — gas and diesel; vessel sewage pump out and dump station; and a full service maintenance facility that includes an indoor maintenance bay and wet slip supported by a six-ton lift.

Boaters will also find bathroom, shower and laundry facilities, a ship's store, and restaurant that serves breakfast and lunch, Monday through Friday. The restaurant's serving schedule varies, according to season. Fees charged for all marina services can be paid

with credit card or cash.

Grogan said the public is restricted to using only the marina's boat ramp and restaurant.

"Some (public) still get a bang out of our location and become regular customers," she added.

Customers authorized to use all of the marina's services also have access to Fort Monroe's other recreational activities. These include the post's fitness center, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, tennis, basketball and racquetball courts, picnic areas, teen center, community center, library, and bowling center.

Open too, for all visitors, is Fort Monroe's Casemate Museum, a five-minute walk from the marina. Located inside the moat of the largest stone fort ever built in the United States, sightseers at the museum learn about the post's rich history, contributions to the nation and current missions.

The marina also serves as an official Virginia Weigh Station for any customer to weigh various fish species in competing for awards as determined by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission. Virginia hunting and fishing licenses can also be purchased.

The Virginia Clean Marina Program has officially recognized Old Point Comfort Marina as a Virginia Clean Marina, for meeting higher environmental, safety and management standards that exceed what is legally required of a marina in the Commonwealth.

Old Point Comfort Marina is also a Boat U.S. cooperating marina.

For those needing information on the marina's services, fees and hours of operation for all facilities, contact Grogan at 757-788-4308.



Photo above - Boat owner, Steve Butkus, guides his craft to the Old Point Comfort Marina maintenance facility. Photo below left - The post marina's aesthetics include this gate, which alludes to an old John Steinbeck novel (published in 1945) about the dock workers of Cannery Row within Monterey, Calif.



Photo left - Dick Cassat, an Old Point Comfort Marina employee, maneuvers a hydraulic lift arm into place at the marina's maintenance facility. Watercraft up to 28-feet in length, and weighing up to six tons can be serviced at the facility. Photo below - Joann Gauthier U.S. Army Cadet Command, left, and Bill Neff, Fort Monroe MWR Auto Craft Shop manager, check out the fishing gear sold at the Marina's boating store. Several varieties of bait, boating equipment, marine sports wear and shower and locker room facilities are also available.

Photos by Patrick Buffett



Monroe Marina employee displays 'model behavior'

BY PATRICK BUFFETT
CASEMATE STAFF WRITER

With tiny toothpick lamps and wee wood-dowel moorings, Fort Monroe's Dick Cassat has demonstrated his "model behavior" as an employee of Old Point Comfort Marina.

Working evenings in his garage at home, Cassat has crafted a near-identical model of his work site along McNair Road. The model includes the 333 boat slips at Old Point Comfort, as well as a replica of the two-story marina building to include its wood steps and second-floor balcony.

"I even have the correct number of spaces in the parking lot," Cassat boasted.

Now displayed in the marina's main sales area, the model is used as a familiarization tool for new customers. "Before, we just used a blueprint, and it was kind of hard relating the drawings to the actual features of the marina," Cassat said.

The model also came in handy during the recent MWR Expo on post. "It was a great way to show everything we have to offer here," he said.

Shrugging his handy work off as

"no big deal," Cassat said woodcrafts are just an occasional hobby that keeps him from getting bored at home. He has also built a number of decorative nautical knick-knacks, which he has donated to the store to be sold to interested customers.

Late last year he also designed a "high-water" t-shirt meant to commemorate the flood levels experienced on post during Hurricane Isabel.

Cassat said he'll continue to tinker with his marina model when there's time. "I suppose I could paint the lines on the street and I'd like to get a photo of the (Hampton Roads Bridge) tunnel to use as a backdrop."

Coworker Theresa Grogan, the Marina's manager, said she's proud of Cassat's work. "Dick is one of the most innovative and energetic employees I have ever had the pleasure of working with," she said.

"He approaches his job the same way he did this model project — with tenacity and a sense of adventure. If anyone can think of a unique project, it's Dick! I think he must stay awake at night thinking up of this kind of stuff."



Photo by Patrick Buffett

Dick Cassat points out the finer details of his replica of Old Point Comfort Marina on post. The tops of more than 145 toothpicks were used to make the lamp posts.